15 April 2015

R. NADAL/L. Pouille

6-2, 6-1

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. With today's win you are 27-3 against a guy who is born in the '90s. All your losses against guys born in the '90s came in the last six months.

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know exactly which players are from '90s. But obviously my opponent of today, Lucas, he has everything to be a good player: good serve, very good shots from the baseline, he know how to play the points, good rhythm of legs. Sure he will has good chances to be in a high position of ranking.

He's young. I think he has a very high level. Yesterday he win against a player who came here playing very well, playing quarterfinals in Miami. So was a great win. And I think today he didn't play bad. I think I played a very solid match.

But I see the match that was a tough one, but I played little bit better than what I was doing before.

Q. Have you changed your racquet or the strings recently?

RAFAEL NADAL: No. I heard about somebody write that I change my strings. My strings are the same. I changed my racquet, not the strings.

Q. Why did you change the racquet?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, honestly, we were thinking about before the season start. But was not enough time to prepare the racquet for before the season start. So now the racquets are ready. I practiced with them in Mallorca since I came back from Miami.

Is a little bit of change. I really didn't change the racquet since very, very long time ago, since I don't remember when. But is a change to try to have little bit more spin. The holes between the strings are a little bit bigger than the other racquet. We decided to change the racquet to try to increase little bit the spin again.

Is true that with this new racquet, probably I have less control. Not today. In theory I have less control. In theory I have more power and more spin, so...

But what I am trying to find with the new racquet always is a change. Always risks when you change things. But I like the racquet. I will continue playing with that racquet.

Q. Do you think it is more difficult today for players who are 19, 20, 21, to break through on clay especially than when you were that age, when you and Novak and Andy and others were that age? Is it more difficult today?

RAFAEL NADAL: Why?

Q. I wonder because maybe on clay it is harder to win points. Players now seem to be more physical, quicker, stronger. Does that make it more difficult for young players to break through?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I am not agree. When I arrived here, when I was younger than this generation, Coria, Nalbandian, Hewitt, Federer, Safin, Roddick, they have been young players when I arrived there. They have been 23, 24. They still young. So always seems like is very difficult when I arrived here.

I thought is almost impossible be there because there is all these players that they are there, and they are young. Will be a big, big challenge to go there.

At the end you are there, you have the level to be there. Is not tougher now or more difficult. Is a thing of level. If you have the level, you can be there.

Is true that what happened the last eight

years on tennis, few players have been more solid and regular than probably the rest of the history of our sport. That's a real thing.

But the real thing, too, is Roger has I don't know how many years old, but is not young anymore. I am not young anymore. Novak is a little bit younger than the two. We are not anymore 23, 22.

So is a thing of level. If they are able to keep playing well, to keep improving, having matches on tour, in months or years, they will be there.

Q. There is no reason why someone who is 19 or 20...

RAFAEL NADAL: The reason that you say, I do not agree. Maybe because other facts I don't want to say. But is not because the players are more physical today. Is more level of tennis than another thing.

Q. You were very solid today. How much confidence does it give you, a match like today?

RAFAEL NADAL: I was practicing well before the tournament start. Had a good five days of practice here in Monte-Carlo that I felt well. Always the competition is more important.

After what happened in Miami, sure is a test always a match that you play after what happened there. Was a good test for me. I repeat: the result is easy, but the match was not easy and the opponent was not easy. I was able to win with a very positive score.

I don't know how many unforced errors I did during the whole match, but for sure almost no one. I played with the right mentality, the right concentration. I didn't have mistakes in a row. That's something that happened the last couple months with me. I was able to play a few games good, then I played one game that I have four mistakes in a row or three mistakes in a row, something that I need to change that. Historically I am a player that I am a regular player, I can have mistakes, but not three in a row.

I am working on that to fix that. Today I fixed. Today I play solid. Today I play with no mistakes in a row. I play aggressive when I have to play aggressive. I hit some good passing shots than the last couple months, a thing that I haven't been doing very well.

I don't know what going to happen tomorrow. But today I go back to the hotel with fantastic feeling because I play probably the best match of the year for me.

Q. You may have to play John Isner tomorrow. What do you remember of the match you played in Roland Garros when you were down two sets to one? Also is this surface better for you because it's less quick probably than Roland Garros?

RAFAEL NADAL: I remember the match, yes. The surface is not slower than one in Roland Garros one. The court is smaller. That makes the conditions always a little bit faster than when the court is bigger.

He is a very dangerous player in any surface because his serve works well in clay, hard, indoor, everywhere.

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